Lens #3  
Reader-Response  
King of Shadows

**Audience:** Jenna, Daniella, Britt  
**Purpose:** State why the book is relatable to children and how to use the book in future classrooms.  
**Engagement:** There is no single way to use a book and to look at it.  
**Genre:** Essay, reflection   
  
  
King of Shadows is about a boy named Nat who has a gifted talent of acting. He goes through life without his parents, and he keeps his feeling bottled up inside him. When he travels back in time, he gets to meet the famous William Shakespeare. During his travel, he looks to William as a father figure and finally embraces his feelings and can finally remember good times he had with his father. This book can relate to many students, whether they have gone through a loss in their family, or even if their parents are divorced, since it’s the separation and abandonment that Nat feels. As I was reading Pleasures, there was a section about orphans in books. A quote that I found that is relatable to King of Shadows is “In depicting orphans, writers can focus on children’s desire for independence or on their fear of loss of security” (p. 197). We can sense and feel that Nat doesn’t want to talk about his parents with his peers, because he is trying to deal with it and he doesn’t want to lose the bond with his friends and replace it with sympathy, at least this is how I look at it.  
  
I recommend this book to teachers. They should have their students read King of Shadows before they start reading the plays by William. The language in this book can help prepare them for the actual plays, since they use the same language. I know when I was reading the plays in high school; I never understood what he was trying to say, even if the translation was to the side on the original text. The students will also get a feel for the time period and know the history of The Globe and the people who were part of that century.   
  
Teachers can have a variety of options of what they want to do with this book. One thing they can do is have Literature Circles like we did in class and like the video that we watched. It gets the students to think about the important parts of the book and reflect and explain the parts that stuck out to them. Another activity that is for younger students is to draw a picture of their favorite part of the book and reflect on why they chose it. Again, this makes them think about in depth the reasons behind their thinking. One last activity the students can do is to act out the book. Some students learn better when they see something, which goes along the activity we did when we read Dear Mr. Henshaw. Also, it gets them ready when they read about William’s plays, since they will either read them, watch them, act some of the scenes out, or all of the above. Getting the students actively involved in their learning is very important. From what I learned in my classes about teaching is that when the students are excited and doing something fun, it’s more likely they will want to participate and they will also learn more by hands-on activities. Teachers have to remember not to just do the same thing over and over again and to just teach the students something.  
  
From our literature circle, one thing really stuck to me that I didn’t catch by myself. We were talking about if Nat would have wanted to stay in the past or not. Jenna pointed out that he couldn’t because both Nat’s looked different. She said that no one was allowed to see him in the hospitals and that the nurses that took care of him and the one that released him were different. As I look back to the sections of the book, I can now see that. The discussions that we had made me think differently about what I read and I also got to hear everyone’s opinion of the story. Also, I like how this book is like a dream and the play that he participates in is A Midsummer Night’s Dream. I never read that play before, but I can get a sense of what it’s about and it was cleaver for the author to make the “dream” part of the book. Again, everyone can relate to Nat in some way and teachers should have their students read this book before they start to gain the knowledge of William Shakespeare.